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## AGES OF LEISURE

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ALFRED H. LLOYD  
University of Michigan

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### ABSTRACT

*Leisure as much a problem as work.*—Not less important than the problem of labor and efficiency, of occupational expertness, is the problem of leisure, today pressing for reckoning. For many leisure is only rest or entertainment, but it is important to life constructively. Beset with dangers, it still is of evolutionary value, enabling education, imagination, progressive adventure. *Three eras of leisure.*—Witness the leisure afforded by long infancy and youth, in some sense the basis of man's superiority. Witness, again, the leisure and culture made possible by slavery domestic and proprietary or socially institutional. Witness, thirdly, the leisure which has been coming to man through automatic machinery, the "Iron Man," and which offers such adventure, such mixed danger and opportunity, as history has never known. *The new leisure and industrial democracy.*—With this third leisure must be associated the call for an industrial democracy. All democracy would free men from some subjection and insure to all in some measure and to many in large measure the leisure attending the liberation and also the opportunity and importance attending the leisure; and, as to democracy today, with so much automatic and dehumanized instrumentation of life, leisure might properly even be added as a fourth natural right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. The servile class, then, servants, laborers, even soldiers, would participate in the results, benefits, and responsibilities of modern mechanical automatism. *With the new leisure a new culture.*—As leisure through non-human instruments must have a quality different from that resting on slavery or on any labor and fatigue of man's own kind, so the culture and adventure enabled or actually incited by it must be different. There is no universal culture, any culture always being a specific answer to the challenge in the peculiar restraining instruments of its time. Thus the challenge of today comes from the Iron Man, the Giant Automaton, and no former culture can answer. Analogously, Virgil may have accompanied Dante, but he could not have replaced him.

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In these days when economists and educators and the humanly and socially interested generally in their several and different ways are putting emphasis on technical skill, on professional and occupational efficiency, when work and its productivity are being put forward as the important problems of the hour, when the country is restless over every sign of unemployment and the common wish seems to be to see every wheel turning and everybody busy, in these days it is well to reflect that at least of equal importance with the great problem of work there is, pressing for a reckoning and obtrusively obvious to those who will open their eyes or do not insist on closing them, the problem of leisure. True, some are already feeling keenly the importance of this problem, among them

the two authors<sup>1</sup> of the recent articles in the *Atlantic Monthly* on the Iron Man; but the general public, including many who read and think, is still in need of being aroused. Its eyes may be opening; but, in spite of the great lessons of the war, it can hardly be said to be really awake and alert. Is real efficiency to be judged only by visible or ponderable results? Is education only an affair of methods and tests and professional self-consciousness? Is economics, theoretical or practical, only for maintenance of a *status quo* and large expansion or accumulation in kind? Above all, if the signs or promises of new leisure and more leisure are all that they appear, is nothing to be done? Is the opportunity to be lost?

Unfortunately leisure is not always, perhaps not commonly, thought of in positive terms. Far too often it is regarded only as cessation from work. Thus it is not just "impractical" but also idle and futile; it "butters no bread" and even affords no spiritual pabulum; it means only rest, careless diversion, often slumber. As to making any direct and positive contribution to life and growth it is too often not valued in this way.

Yet leisure, insignificant though it may seem to many except as an opportunity for rest and recuperation in "practical" living, in the conventional life that would simply maintain or at most, if seeking change, would only expand its normal self, is in actual fact of most vital importance. It is quite indispensable to a life that has any quality of adventure and requires imagination, invention, and real growth. What, do you ask, may be its part in a life of this sort? Leisure's contribution to an adventurous and growing life—the only life worth while—can probably be seen best by consideration of what, as I would submit, are the three great ages of leisure in human evolution. A pity it is to use so cumbersome a phrase of so light a theme. Leisure, however, carries no light burden and in evidence I would now ask attention to each of the three ages, or eras, in order. Moreover, while leisure is always a

<sup>1</sup> Arthur C. Pound and Ernest Lloyd. The articles appeared under Mr. Pound's name, but Mr. Pound has explained Mr. Lloyd's part in the *Atlantic* for December, 1921. Mr. Pound has since published a book: *The Iron Man in Industry*. Boston: 1922. Mr. Lloyd has a book very near completion: *The Wages System*.

factor of value, actual or possible, for the individual and while its value to the individual cannot be separated from its value racially and historically, my present interest is the broader one; in ages or eras, not hours or days, of leisure.

Evolutionists from Anaximander of the sixth century before Christ to John Fiske twenty-five centuries later have dwelt now and again and with more or less knowledge and appreciation on the importance of a prolonged infancy in the human race. To his long infancy and the leisure of it man has been said to owe his superiority to the other animals. This statement of course hardly affords a complete explanation of man's position; but, however incomplete and made from whatever confusing slant, it is weighty with truth. Also, although referring primarily only to the human infant's long period of suckling and physical dependence, it may be so extended as to apply to the whole of youth, certainly to the period before sexual maturity and even to the still longer period before the close of what is ordinarily considered preparation and education for real life. Racially and individually the value of this prolonged time of mental and physical leisure, with its opportunity for the play—not always as playful as it appears—of childhood and youth, for strengthening the sentiments and associations of the home, for the preparatory education, whether of the more formal and deliberate sort or of the sort, not less important, that is informal and natural, would be very hard to overstate. In time of such leisure man has not merely rested from his labors; also he has acquired experience and vision, ideas and ideals. In the youth of particular individuals obviously there is hardly any labor to rest from, but racially youth does afford opportunity for recuperation and always, mark now of its more positive value, it brings the experience that prompts enterprise and invention. The leisure of man's youth is the great source of his idealism, inviting growth, inspiring change in kind or quality.

All of which, now that I have written it down, seems so simple that it can hardly have needed to be said. In the contributions of leisured youth to life and growth we merely have one of those truths that all can recognize and that many have liked to dwell upon. In fact sometimes we discourse together about the weather and could

not really get along without the weather in our conversation. Sometimes, our mood more serious, we sound deeper commonplaces of life and consider, as here and now, the leisure and idealism of youth and, although too often our thought may be of the carelessness of youth, we are agreed that without youth and its leisure life would have little interest. Are we ourselves mature and old? We would become young again. Of youth, too, of prolonged infancy, as of other ages, it is well to remember that, whatever its value in the past, when man first began to outstrip other animals, it constitutes now a heritage enjoyed in important measure by every human being that is born.

But, pleasant as it always is to discourse about the leisure of youth and its value for human evolution, in what I have set out to say in this essay my primary interest is not in youth, past or present, as an age of leisure. Two other ages of leisure, also when understood and appreciated positive in their value, are interesting me much more. Both of these will be found to have many of the marks of youth, freshness, adventure, vision; but the specific leisure of human infancy and youth has been mentioned here and first discussed only for definition or illustration of leisure itself as something more than cessation from work.

So I turn to a second age of leisure, which although quite different in the underlying conditions will show the same general character or function in history. Thus man has owed much to the leisure that has come to him through slavery in one or another of its forms. Ancient civilizations in particular, perhaps most notably that of the Greeks, who proved themselves in remarkable degree equal to their opportunity, seem to have owed their culture, their art and science and philosophy, to their slaves. Slaves belonged to the Greek family almost if not quite as naturally as parents and children. Even Aristotle found it difficult to think of the unity of the family without inclusion of the slaves. For that matter some householders or at least some housewives still extant might be suspected of being orthodox Aristotelians in this respect. Apart from domestic life, too, dependence for leisure and its opportunities on a servile class is by no means a matter merely of antiquity. To speak broadly, in home life and in public economy,

in time of peace and in time of war, from ancient times even down to the present day there has been some dependence on human beings in some condition of service, on slaves or on a well-defined and virtually institutional, serving class or, war coming, on an army. Such service has brought important leisure and the leisure, while not the direct source or cause of culture, has provided the opportunity, both making a public for it and providing many of its active and leading exponents.

Well do I remember the shock I had when hearing years ago from one of my teachers that slavery, which I had been taught to hate with a hate still colored by stories and issues of the Civil War, had made possible the Greek free citizenship and so, as the Greeks seized the opportunity, the brilliant Greek civic life and Greek culture long regarded and even now regarded among the greatest gifts of history to civilization. How could such flowers have sprung from and been in any sense dependent upon so offensive a thing as human slavery? At the same time, if my memory be not at fault, I learned that the Greek word for scholarship was in its origin associated with or even identical with a word meaning leisure. Our English word, as matter of fact, comes from the Greek *σχολή*. Our schools are places of leisure, leisure for scholarship. But, not to pause for the wit and humor which just here with thoughts of our own leisured students it is hard to get by, from that day, I suspect, my views of life lost some of their simplicity and took on a new quality, turning more sophisticated and more patient with the complexities, the ironies, and the paradoxes, of life. Too clearly something good and true and beautiful had somehow owed its rise to what seemed wholly bad and false and ugly. There can be no notable gain, I had to conclude, without serious cost, even human sacrifice. This truth doubtless seemed harder to me then than it does now. Then it did come as a great shock. I was able, or have since been able, to understand even human sacrifice as a religious rite.

Yes, for centuries—who can tell the number of them or who can say that their count is finished—slaves or servants, making a “lower class” except possibly as soldiers in time of war, have been an enabling condition of leisured prosperity and civilization. In

time of war servile man has been lifted to the dignity of the soldier; pomp and circumstance and martial music have imparted a certain glory to his servile state, and for the time being social differences have very generally disappeared; but only the exigencies of war and the common danger can account for the leveling, if leveling there really be. Leveling with reservations it has often seemed to me and, be the cloud or glory of the military life what it may, the general situation is the same in war as in peace: dependence of social and political life, of its safety and leisure and possible progress on a serving if not always openly servile class. Moreover, that successful war in the old days yielded slaves as part of the spoils and in our own time, being not yet without its peculiar notions of victory and vengeance, would make the defeated enemy servile, only emphasizes what I have been saying about the second age of leisure.

In general, then, this second age is the age of the brunt of life being borne by a serving class domestically, in public economy and politically and of the quality and the understanding of life, the conscious purpose and the direction, being determined and developed by an upper leisured class. It is true that "brunt" and "quality" are at best only relative terms, that leisure, for example, has its own brunt, its own hardship, and servile labor has its own quality, say its own leisured irresponsibility; but any antithesis of life has to stand qualification and this of brunt and quality, servile labor and leisure, besides being no exception to the rule, itself holds large meaning, its meaning even enhanced rather than diminished by the complication.

Also, still with regard to the second age of leisure, on the whole up to the present time, as history has commonly been read, our civilization has for centuries been in this age. Signs of change, involving significant modification, have been in evidence for some time and the age itself has really had its own divisions or periods, as my rather indiscriminate illustrations of it may have suggested. There have been at least two different periods, one in important ways different from the other: a period of domestic slavery and a period of institutional constraint, membership in a lower and servile class being different from and certainly some advance on

slavery as such. But, in general, under a system which has now to seem to us, as we look back and reflect, to have been very costly, whatever may have been the heights attained, our civilization has spent or exploited a good many human beings. While I have no taste for extravagance of speech and specially would avoid sensational metaphor, I have to confess to discovering in it all, even in the institutional bondage of the second period, a certain likeness to cannibalism. True, even cannibalism, like other forms of human sacrifice, has had its religious sanction; but religions as well as customs and institutions come and go. The sanction aside, what is cannibalism but, like slavery, man consuming man for man's purposes!

Besides the cost in servile, more or less submerged human beings there has been also large cost of a different sort, resulting quite directly from the leisure that the service affords. In any age leisure has its own intimate dangers. A leisured class is not wholly on the profit side. Thus, as the history of civilization has again and again revealed, leisure breeds license and the consequences of license. A leisured and more or less cultured class will always have its two groups: those whose freedom is dissipation, extravagance of one kind or another, and potential if not eventual degeneracy and those who, being free, enter upon productive thought and conduct and so achieve something at least, as must be hoped, to balance the losses of the others. All is not gain, then, that is brilliantly leisured. Yet real progress, impossible without the opportunities of leisure, simply has to bear the expense of license and its dissipation as well as that of man's self-consumption or self-exploitation. Even infancy and youth, important as we see them, show a startling mortality and much disaster, physical and moral, from their inexperience, impulsiveness, indiscretion. It is true, as to the second age, that possibly off-setting that expense of self-consumption there is a certain ideal value in the very service of men to men. In war, of course, the relation is capitalized: The Service. There may be, too, some compensation for the costly license and dissipation: the fine recklessness of it, the courage, the hard experience. But, be all these things as they may, it is not my purpose at this time to try to check up, as the accountants say, all the items of the account.



The third age of leisure remains to be considered. Its coming seems to have been associated with the rise of our modern democracy and to have involved, not yet by any means elimination of the service or of the exploitation of the second age, but significant reduction or modification of it. The great motive of democracy might be said to be liberation of men from some condition of subjection and distribution of the leisure attending the liberation to all in some portion and to as many as possible in large portion.

Some time ago writing on democracy<sup>1</sup> I pointed out that our present democracy, judged not abstractly and confusedly with any democratic movement whatever, as if democracy were just something in general, but historically and for the actual context and concrete experiences and purposes of its rise, involved the coming of an industrial order and passing of militarism and human self-consumption in any form and that the great democratic ideas of liberty and equality and natural rights should be understood accordingly, being given their specific and relevant or contextual meanings instead of taken as quite general, unqualified and merely eternal—as empty as eternal!—verities. When men actually call for equality and natural rights they are in protest against some specific inequalities and some visible and no longer natural and warranted restraint. I pointed out also that the change from a military to an industrial order had actually brought or was rapidly bringing relief to mankind, in a most important respect “letting him out from under,” and also it was even my notion, in spite of the strangeness and surprise in such an idea, that the very contribution which industrialism seemed thus to be making or preparing had actually been made possible by the monarchical and militaristic régime preceding it. Too often we are given to thinking of new eras, new dispensations, as due only to protests against what has been and as wholly supplanting the past, whereas the new may, nay, must spring positively out of the old, coming as outgrowth of experience and education, the appropriate harvest of effort and intelligent attention. Can protest itself have better origin?

Militarism, which already we have associated with the dependence of society for its safety, leisure and progress on human service,

<sup>1</sup> “The Duplicity of Democracy” in the *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XXI, No. 1, pp. 1-14.

on a servile class, has been so much human nature, so many bodies and so many minds, done into machinery, say an army with its three main divisions, one for domestic service, one for economic production, a third for national defense: but industrialism, at least characteristically or in its primary tendency and motive, has been and ever more obviously and consciously is, not human nature, but outer and physical nature so treated, man being in so far relieved. The former has depended on servants, laborers, soldiers; the latter, ever more and more, on machinery, in the broadest sense on "labor-saving" machinery; and, as I think and am here submitting, the very possibility of the latter has come about by a certain generalization from the former.

Certainly experience and its education always prompt generalization, involving among other things the change of a condition or institute into a general and versatile instrument, of something immediate into something at once more general and objective and only mediate. Apparently men had to be themselves the intimate parts or cogs in a machine, as soldiers or servants are, before they could be set free from such restraint and become, as with our democracy and its rising industrialism, the separate and independent users of machinery.<sup>1</sup>

To quote now a single sentence from the cited paper on democracy: "Industrialism is not just militarism supplanted, but militarism, its power and system and organization, become only mediate to human life or say also, if I may hope to be understood, militarism and its spirit and manner vicarious in the natural environment, militarism at least in process of being de-humanized and objectified." And made, too, immeasurably more versatile! What, then, but the Iron Man! The Army Vicarious! Has not the greatest purpose of our democracy been to effect, so far as possible, just such dehumanization and objectification in the machinery of life; through external machinery to bring leisure and the opportunities of leisure, not to the few, but even to all?

<sup>1</sup> So were they also under positive law before they became freely and generally rational or mathematical; creatures of doctrine or institution and defenders of the faith before liberal thinkers; subjects of a monarch before all royal; in spiritual matters penitents at the confessional before personally and independently conscientious moral beings.

Thus in the great historic change from the medieval "ism" to the modern, a change perhaps coming decisively to its own only in our time or in a nearing future, we see man, thanks to his training, learning at last *en masse* or communally to use something besides himself for carrying out his purposes and we may be reminded of the small boy, in the nursery who, being hit in the head by a bureau, hit back with his head, but some days later, meeting with a similar accident, more wisely kept his head to himself and threw one of his blocks at the offending furniture. Willie made history just then, the history of industrialism succeeding militarism; of mechanics succeeding institutionalism; of democracy succeeding aristocracy; of some leisure for all by machinery succeeding leisure for a few by human service.

Of course in the rise of democracy and industrialism there have been other contributing factors besides the gradual fabrication of the Iron Man. This great automaton, almost a literal fulfilment of hopes or boasts in the eighteenth century—was it not Buffon (1707-88) who with others insisted on the possibility of an animated statue—stands out or rather in all its power and versatility moves as a striking witness both to the truth and reality of the world which has been disclosed especially by the mathematical sciences, physics and mechanics, and to the reason of men and their self-control, always the great gift of reason. Only reason and self-control could ever have made the present vicarious instrumentation of life possible. Could there have been manual dexterity in use of tools without individual co-ordination and self-control? Can there be, socially, effective use of machinery where there are not common reason and corporate or co-operate control? Still, whatever have been the other factors important in the rise and progress of our present era, the great automaton is of chief interest to us at this writing. Its gift of leisure should far surpass that of human service and the servile classes.

It took so much more effort and skill to run the old-fashioned kitchen stove than it takes to run the self-supplying, possibly self-lighting, gas range of today. Now one man, taught how in an hour or two, through a shortened working day tends a machine that does work which even hundreds not very many years ago could

not do in a week or perhaps even in a year. At the earlier time, too, each one of the throng needed more experience, sometimes including a long apprenticeship or a long special training of some kind, than the single attendant requires today. Indeed it might be argued that the present-day emphasis on technical and occupational training—witness, for example, the increasing number of technical and professional schools—is behind the times, almost suggesting the closed barn after the loss of the horse or rather the locked garage after theft of the horseless and automatic carriage. Excuse me for insisting on being so up to date. Relatively to other needs there may be less need of occupational training now than there used to be. Further, not to stop for an argument and to continue my discourse, space long traversed only with great difficulty and danger is now no longer a serious obstacle, thanks to the established and standardized system of quick and reliable transportation and communication. Equally and coincidently limitations of time have been largely overcome. Even eternity, some overprofound fellow has suggested, is near to being merely a great Now. In all departments of life, to an extent, which is surprising when first remarked, objective system and standardization have become operative, changing amazingly our distances and affecting not less the quality of our will. Lastly, even the fine arts, notably music and drama and the pictorial or representative arts, thanks to wonderful machinery, are in everybody's reach or are rapidly getting there, requiring neither the effort and study nor in other ways the cost once exacted. And, should war come, so at least we are being told, a few men in an airplane, dropping certain bombs, could accomplish in a few minutes more than an army of thousands on a long campaign.

In short, in the ways of peace and in the ways of war man has learned greatly to spare himself, to act with skill and power through something else, the Giant Automaton, the Vicarious Army, and so to have for good or for ill, no longer just a single leisured class, but a leisured democracy. True, democracy and a certain freedom were achieved, at least in principle, early in the present era; earthly life, personal liberty, and property rights were distributed to all in that eighteenth century; but today, the animated statue having

actually been fabricated, the possible freedom is more positive and substantial. Then it was freedom—granted if not always realized—from something, being in the main only security from exploitation; today it is or is getting to be freedom to do something, the leisure of it being not just security but leisure, so to speak, with some time to spend; and, while for accuracy in any complete estimate of conditions at the present time some modification or discounting of what has been said might be desirable, while much that has been treated as at least measurably accomplished may really represent only strong tendency or promise, the fact of the new leisure, different from the old in its source and offered not to the few but at least in some measure to all, would seem to be a fact of the time that no one will be disposed to dispute. Whatever other meanings may properly attach to the phrase, now so often heard, “the new democracy,” the “next step in democracy” or “industrial democracy,” this idea of real leisure for all must be included. Should it be treated as a fourth “natural” right, earned at last? Earthly life, personal liberty, property *and* leisure! Leisure, not just to rest, but to do something, perhaps something pleasant and diverting, perhaps something cultural, the new right of all!

And leisure, as was said here in the beginning, is a pressing problem of the day at least as urgent as that of work. Then it must be faced. With shorter hours and shorter weeks and increasing mechanical efficiency, with—for so some insist—relatively less need of occupational training, with greater wealth and presumably too more general wealth, with the fine arts as well as the practical arts functioning vicariously in machinery, with the at least possible passing of militarism, with standardization and quantity production and dehumanization in so many departments of life, this problem of leisure, I say, must be faced squarely. Man, so it would appear, unless from higher standards of living or from increases in population the demand for production should actually keep pace with the increased efficiency, is to have more spare time per capita than ever before in history and is to have this with all the opportunities and with all the dangers. Civilization must look to her defenses even while she wakens to new ideals and purposes.

By what "new education," direct or indirect, may man be made fit for his new leisure? Certainly special exaggeration of the productive occupations and of mere technique, with forgetting of things, at once more leisured and more cultural, that used to be found important, is not called for. Exactly what is called for, I cannot say, not being at all clear in my own mind. A few reflections, however, results of an effort at thinking to a solution, may carry some pertinent suggestions and these reflections, accordingly, I shall write down. Of one thing only do I feel confident: The call is for a new culture made possible by the new leisure, and the response must be general or social, the people at large taking part; it must not be confined to a few.

Now—the reflective now—if the new leisure in amount and importance be what it has appeared to be and if, as might be inferred, the mingled danger and opportunity of it be at all in proportion, then is civilization entering upon an adventure for romantic character, for need of wisdom and imagination and courage far exceeding anything in the past. Indeed it would seem as if man were being brought to a testing the like of which he has not even distantly approached before.

Analogies from the past are often interesting. Also, although of course at best only analogies, they may be helpful. Already they have been helpful here and in some measure they may be counted upon now in our groping into the hidden present, which is the future. History is ever repeating herself, although she is far indeed from a slavish copyist, always mixing original creation with her apparent repetitions. In short, however analogous, the past may not rob the coming adventure of its mystery; it may only give reality to the adventure by its dim outlines of possibilities.

The past, then, shows that with leisure as gift of slavery or human service in some form the leisured group, excepting always such as have spent their spare time idly and wastefully, has rendered in its own way a real service by turning to the fine arts, to literature, to science, and to philosophy. Of such uses of leisure in the case of the Greeks mention has been made. The service or benefit of them has lain, not just in the resulting adornment of life, worthy as this is, but also and especially in the evolutionary import, the chal-

lence of routine and utility, the meaning for progress, which such valuations and critical interpretations and rational explanations, of life, broadening and deepening life as they have by their ever more general and more objective standpoint, have very notably revealed to life and impressed upon it. Once more apology for cumbersome language. It is surely no accident, but a positive contribution of leisure, that in the past such culture has been the forerunner of important and progressive, although often very dramatic, changes. Hardly should one expect progress without dramatic incidents even to the passing of Golden Ages and the surrender, for loss or gain, of whole peoples.

Whoever thinks of leisure and its culture as only so much aestheticism or intellectualism, valuing culture, if at all, merely for its ornamentation or possibly for its use as a fine cloak for idleness and extravagance, has quite failed to understand its most important rôle. In some sense it may ornament and attractively cloak or fortunately hide the life of its time, making a Golden Age, but, be this as may be, sooner or later it has to find its fulfilment in a new life, having wider scope and deeper meaning, and in a more comprehensive and more skilfully devised social order. A Golden Age is much like a sunset, promise of another day when the coming night be passed. The ancient culture, for example, notably that of the Greeks, or the new culture that came to Christendom with the Renaissance must certainly be so valued, that is, as preceding mystery and change, as inviting the very life it seems to adorn to historic surrender and adventure.

Consider how in a leisured culture, in art and in science and in philosophy, according to the differences in the measure of independence, there has always been some challenge of established ways, a call more or less articulate for a new medium. Does not all art demand license? Is it ever art if not creative? Does not science observe objectively, looking off from things human and traditional at what is natural or real and so different if not even quite negative? Is it ever science if in its reported results it do not betray human tradition, discovering a new heaven and a new earth? Does not philosophy even outrun accurate methodical and objective science, being essentially free and speculative? Is it ever philoso-

phy, as some wise humorist might say, if it does not see best with its eyes closed? Culture, then, is evolutionary and on any other terms, born of leisure, it would not be loyal to its origin. Romance, not domesticity; novelty, not familiarity; invention, not imitation; the impractical, not the "practical," has ever been its most appropriate interest and object. Uncreative, it would not be culture. In my morning paper I find an artist insisting that art requires surprise. It does—although slap-stick surprises are hardly good art. All the leisured disciplines of culture, to society's danger as to its opportunity, also require surprise. Art is no exception. Cubism and Futurism might be a shade less bold if they would remember the past and, remembering, appreciate among some other things that surprise is a commonplace of all culture—besides being an incident of all evolution.

The past shows that with leisure has come culture. Culture, challenging establishment, seeking a new medium, has bred historic adventure, evolution. Surprise has been its interest or motive, as dangerous as opportune and worth while. Wherefore, by analogy from the past, what of the third age of leisure, leisure through the Vicarious Army, the Iron Man, the Giant Automaton?

Clearly the new leisure cannot be wholly like the old. It must have its own different quality coming as it does from such a different source. Riding in an automobile is very different from riding behind animals that can grow weary or from being carried, with literal meaning now or in metaphor, by one's own fellow-beings whose fatigue or subordination one cannot help feeling; and, generally, leisure through automatic machinery and standard impersonal systems must be very different indeed in its quality from leisure through direct human service. In so many ways today both for work and for leisure we are living in a world of human products or activities with the human factor itself absent. Do we even half realize how much of the human we have been getting only mediately, by what have sometimes been called expressively, however inelegantly, the "canning" processes? But, I say, with our leisure so different in its quality must come a different quality of culture.

Does our wide dependence on the "canning" processes mean serious loss, a lessening of the importance of the human factor,



the human touch? Many will doubtless think so. An age of machinery and instrumental automatism seems cold to them. They lament the passing of the artisans of the old days and of hand-made articles. A recent English writer<sup>1</sup> decries and even resents the conditions of our time, seeing no advantage at all in them, only danger and distinct loss; only speed and complexity and lifeless or soulless however skilful instrumentation, elaborate and futile and purposeless, quite too automatic for real human value. But, natural as this view may be as a first reaction, it cannot be the final view. Even true as it probably is to feelings we have all had, as from day to day we have moved about in the standard milieu of our time, reflection and revision are imperative. The meaning of it all conceivably may be or presumptively must be, not a lessening of the importance of the human factor, but its great enhancement. The wider and more successful life's instrumentation, the deeper and fuller the meaning, the profounder the value, of the life which is served. If leisure and its culture are a challenge of the instrument, the instrument in its turn just by its efficiency challenges life's values and purpose. Between his lines that English author is really putting this question: What now is our new human purpose? What the new life, the new humanism, that the Giant Automaton is making possible? New, but at the same time, as with other "repetitions" in history, carrying on for the old?

Our automatic machinery means, as we have seen, quantity production in practically all of the needs and also in the diversions of life and so a wide distribution, carrying to the people at large what formerly only the few could have. Not only are the telephone and the automobile coming nearer and nearer within reach of everyone, but nearly everyone may hear the great music of the time and see the great play. The idea of the public utility or of public conveyance and convenience has been getting ever wider application. In fact, in view of all the conditions, one may well be reminded of a sort of prototype and miniature of our times, the ancient city-state, in which every free citizen had a directly con-

<sup>1</sup> R. Austin Freeman, *Social Decay and Regeneration*. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1921.

scious part in the life of the community, voting in the assembly and attending the latest play. Only now it is the Automatic Man, not slavery, that makes the free citizenship and gives solidarity to the community and the modern community is to the ancient in size and complexity, as well as in the quality of life, as the automatic machinery to the slavery in efficiency and versatility. So in the new life of today, whatever losses some may discover, there is emphatically something still appealing to warm and lively human interest and the appeal, I need hardly say, is insistent and profound.

Moreover, as will be recognized and appreciated, in the past each new step in the instrumentation of life—two such steps we have seen, domestic slavery and socially institutional slavery, and we are now considering a third, the Automatic Man—each new step has brought with it, not merely as some might prefer to have it said and as a superficial view of the facts may have indicated, reaction to something forgotten and thereupon restored, but a distinctly new valuation, a really new and different humanism, involving greater freedom, greater versatility, new types of association, communication, and exchange and at once a deeper personality and a more comprehensive and more complex sphere of interest and action. Again and again in the past with a changing instrumentation, with new utilities, the human or humanistic has seemed to die, in the feeling of some lost forever; but at each change the proclamation has soon been heard: *L'homme est mort; vive l'homme!* The Automatic Man, then, is not now sounding, among his other notes or strains, the death-knell of the human factor, nor most emphatically, is he on the other hand blowing a trumpet for the mere resurrection of a former and now outgrown humanism.

So the new leisure of our era simply must be bringing its own specific culture, its own mutation of human values. What the new forms may be or how by education, of course a new education, the people at large may be brought to meet the new culture to their benefit instead of to their harm, I am still at a loss to say. I am, too, probably quite as weary as any others with the general newism, the new this and the new that, which from painting to politics, from jazz to philosophy has so affected the times. By and large it has so far probably been more an affectation or a dissipation than any-

thing at all substantial. Yet, even so, it is a symptom not to go unnoticed. A new culture, in important respects advancing on the old, must be near at hand. Inarticulate at the moment, impulsive, blind, startling, and often offensive, it is still even now to be reckoned with. We are told of the new poets that "they must say something different and surprising," but that "so far they hardly know what to say" or, still worse, "have nothing to say." In any branch, the new culture, be it art so adventurous as to shock or science so materialistic as to strike negatively at cherished conceits or philosophy so irrational as, quite after Socrates, to "corrupt youth" and to "do dishonor to the gods," must be reckoned with; not, of course, accepted on its face, not swallowed whole, but met squarely and considered honestly. Challenge of the Giant Automaton and its "canned" culture has required courage and could but be inarticulate at first. Of course, were culture only for its own sake, had it no relation to the context of the practical life and were it of no evolutionary value, as many have sometimes seemed to think or wish, the mere recall of a former culture would doubtless quite suffice and would indeed be "safer." Really the pragmatic test, if such be this of contextual relevancy or of evolutionary value, would be quite impertinent now for any culture already past and outgrown. A past and outgrown culture would now be aloof and be only for culture's sake and for life's museums. A present culture, surprising and adventurous, serves the inevitable future, awakening the very life it surprises.

I shall be misunderstood. So often to say anything is unavoidably to go beyond one's meaning. Would I spoil a much cherished belief. Lowell, as I recall, only joining many others found the beauty of the ancient culture, notably the Greek literature, in its being "contemporaneous with our own day," coming to us as a familiar memory, "a veritable Mnemosyne." Indeed, as he insists, culture is universal, making its appeal to mankind of any time and any clime. I may be adorning his tale a little; but, as he seems to say, the more practical and more sordid things of life come and go, while the things of the spirit, among them culture with its art, its music, its literature, are "universal" and "eternal." Indeed they are abstractly. Those words have always a certain magic.

One may conjure with them confidently, as always with abstractions. But morals and gods and cultures also come and go. To Lowell's enthusiasm for the ancients and his fellow-feeling with them, rather momentary than characteristic in his case, I have to respond warmly, until the spell passes, and then I take exception. I have to deepen the fine universality, the eternal fellowship, of cultures with candid regard for their local and historical differences. Even like democracy, culture must be relevant to its times and their instrumentation, which it defies, and must win its place in the universal and eternal and especially its right to so noble a companionship by its timely service of progress.

To take interest today only in quantity production and traditional accumulation, to value only the professional and occupational, only technique and efficiency, to be merely a conservative, complacent or aggressive, in politics or economics or social life or religion, to make use of one's leisure idly or wastefully, to have no active interest in what is impractical and adventurous, is doubtless to add to one's chances of getting rich: but also it is to fall behind the history, which by dint of the challenge of the Iron Giant is now in the making, and is so to lose, except as a slave, any place or part in the real life of the time.